

847/224 Area Codes: Questions and Answers (9/24/01)

Q: When does the 224 Area Code go into effect?

A: The 224 Area Code will not go into use prior to December 13, 2001.

Q: If I have an 847 area code telephone number, will it change when 224 becomes effective?

A: NO. You will keep the same area code and seven digit number you have now.

Q: What geographic area does the new 224 Area Code cover?

A: The 224 Area Code will cover exactly the same geographic area that the 847 Area Code covers. The new area code will “overlay” the same geographic area as the current 847 Area Code.

Q: Can I still get an 847 number for a second line in my home?

A: Because many telephone companies still have numbers available in some areas, it is possible you will be able to get a second line in your home with the 847 area code. However, you will need to ask your local telephone service provider.

Q: Who gets a telephone number with the new 224 Area Code?

A: **If you have an existing 847 area code number, it will not change.** Telephone companies that do not already have numbers, or do not have enough numbers, in the 847 area code, and that meet FCC requirements, likely will be issued numbers in the new 224 area code. If your home or wireless service is provided by a company which receives a 224 area code number, and you start to receive service from them (wireless, fax, modem, pager, new business number, plain telephone service at your residence) after the 224 area code is effective, it is probable that you will be assigned a number with the 224 area code.

Q: If I am making a call within the 847 area code, by dialing 1+ the area code will I be charged for a long distance call?

A: No. The new area code alone will not change calling rates for anyone. Rates are based on times and distance, not on the area code you have.

Q: Will I need to dial 1+ the area code to call a number in the 847 and 224 area codes?

A: Until January 5, 2002, if you have an 847 area code number and you are dialing another 847 area code number, you will not need to dial 1+847. After January 5, 2002, when making any call **within, into, or out of** either the 847 or the 224 area codes you will need to dial 1+ the area code to complete the call.

Q: Why must I dial 11 digits in the 847 and 224 area codes instead of the traditional 7 digits?

A: The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) requires 11 digit dialing for all overlay area codes. In a recent letter to the Illinois Commerce Commission, the FCC stated, "We find that compliance with the 11-digit dialing rule is necessary to further the FCC's national number administration and numbering resource optimization goals."

Q: Why do we need a new area code?

A: The proliferation of second lines and other telecommunication services throughout the 1990s, including wireless, faxes, modems, pagers, small and large business needs, and increases in the general population, has led to the exhaust of numbering resources. At this time, no new blocks of numbers are available in the 847 area code for those telecommunications companies attempting to provide new services to customers; therefore, Area Code 224 must be initiated.

Q: Aren't there millions of unused numbers that still exist in the 847 area code?

A: About 7.8 million numbers exist in an area code when it is new. At this time, about 48%, or roughly 3.7 million of the 847 area code numbers are in use. Due to technological limitations, historical patterns of use, and the arcane rules promulgated by federal regulators and the telephone industry, the system by which numbers are issued allows huge inefficiencies to exist--which is why the 847 area code can be "exhausted" when only 48% of the numbers are actually in use.

Q: Why did the ICC choose to make 224 an overlay area code instead of simply splitting 847 into two separate area codes?

A: After months of meetings and 11 public forums, in May 1998 the ICC voted unanimously to implement an overlay area code rather than split 847 into separate area codes. Two factors which led to the decision were, first, the added cost to businesses (including the printing of new stationary, business cards, signage, etc.) in informing customers and associates of the change and, second, the testimony by individual citizens in the 847 area who urged the ICC to adopt an overlay area code.

Since 1995, the ICC has led the nation in creative and effective ideas in number conservation. Illinois was the first state in the nation to test number pooling as well as the first to administer 1,000 number blocks for wireline carriers. These efforts have forestalled area code exhaust in the 847 area code for over 4 years.

Q: Why isn't there a special area code for pagers and wireless phone numbers?

A: The Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) urged the FCC to allow "technology specific" area codes as early as 1995. Such area codes would have been implemented throughout the Chicago region to meet the capacity needs of wireless and pager service providers. This approach was rejected by the FCC for fear that it would unduly discriminate against pager and wireless providers.

Q: Have overlay area codes been initiated in other parts of the country?

A: Yes. While 224 is the first overlay area code in Illinois, 28 other overlay area codes have been initiated in the U.S. since 1996.

Q: Have other major metropolitan areas been involved with overlay area codes?

A: Yes. 28 overlay area codes have been initiated in the U.S. since 1996, including new overlay area codes in the following large metropolitan areas: Miami, New York (Manhattan, Queens, and Bronx each have 2 overlays), Atlanta, Boston, Denver, Houston, Dallas, Philadelphia, and very shortly, St. Louis.

Q: Are new area codes being introduced in other states?

A: Since 1996, over 120 new area codes have been introduced in the United States.